Permissible Uses of Reading First Funds

1. Remember that the purpose of Reading First is to ensure that *all* of America's children learn to read well by the end of third grade. Reading First is a literacy grant that targets K-3 classrooms, professional development for K-3 teachers and K-12 special education teachers.

2. Anything purchased with Reading First funds MUST be based on scientifically based reading research.
   - **Systematic:** elements of reading instruction subjected to thorough examination;
   - **Careful controls:** study is set up so that the effects can be attributed to one component;
   - **Random assignment to groups** and comparison of methods of instruction;
   - **Rigorous examination of the method** to determine whether results can be generalized to other children/schools.

3. All programs and materials must have documentation of longitudinal studies that prove their effectiveness in teaching children to read. Programs such as Accelerated Reader do not meet these requirements.

4. There is a 3.5% cap on administrative and indirect costs. The majority of this funding needs to reach the classroom and may not be used for central office administration.

5. Reading First funds may not be used to supplant general funds. Capital outlay such as furniture, computer tables, bookshelves, computer labs, copiers, security bars at windows, heavy steel doors, area rugs, bean bag chairs, building repair and building maintenance are not appropriate uses of these funds. These items should be purchased with general funds.

6. We have allowed buildings to purchase one computer per classroom to be used as a component in literacy work stations. This computer is intended to provide practice in the essential components of reading instruction and should provide *practice* for students in actual concepts that have been taught during whole group and small group lessons. The software used

with these computers should not just be time fillers to keep children busy, but rather should target exactly what the child needs to work on.

7. Interventions must target specific needs of learners that are based on data gathered from regular and systematic assessment. Progress monitoring should be used with students needing intensive support. Literacy Coaches need to make wise and careful purchases based on documented needs in the five essential components of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, systematic explicit phonics instruction, oral reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies. Refer to pages 29-31 of the Reading First Grant Announcement and Instructions for further suggestions.

8. If a supplemental program is not listed on pages 29-31, then the documentation must be submitted to MDE prior to making a purchase.

9. Computer software has a difficult time meeting the SBRR requirement because so much of it is too new to have longitudinal studies. In addition, software is often extremely expensive. Districts should select programs with extreme care, making sure that a program very specifically targets one of the essential components of reading instruction. These programs must provide practice on specific concepts taught rather than being generic time fillers in order to provide maximum benefit to children. In addition, districts must check with MDE prior to using any computer software during the literacy block.

10. Professional development resources such as books for book discussion groups during weekly grade level meetings are acceptable provided they support Reading First concepts. Materials and manipulatives to support literacy workstations that address the five essential components of reading instruction are also acceptable uses of RF funds. Titles for book discussion groups must be cleared with MDE prior to purchase.

11. Practice tests from Riverside Publishers for the Iowa Test of Basic Skills are the only test preparation materials for which Reading First funds may be used. Other commercially prepared test practice materials may not be purchased with Reading First funds, nor may such materials be used during the literacy block.

12. The US Dept. of Education has awarded a grant to fund the *What Works Clearinghouse* to encourage informed decision making in education. Please check their website at http://www.w-w-c.org/ for clarification on effective programs and interventions.

13. By the second year, funds should be used to create a print rich environment by improving classroom libraries and building libraries. Books should be appealing and of interest to all students. Titles that correspond with Accelerated Reader may be purchased (many vendors carry these titles), but the software cannot be charged to Reading First. In addition, care should be taken with the selection of titles to include high quality nonfiction as well as a variety of fiction, multicultural topics, and so on.

14. Extended day and summer school programs may not be funded with Reading First funds. These funds are targeted for regular K-3 classrooms in the general education program. Other funding sources may be tapped for these programs.

If you have any questions, please contact Betsy MacLeod, Reading First Consultant (517.373.2590), or Mark Coscarella (517.335.2797), Michigan Department of Education, or VanDeusen-MacleodE@michigan.gov or coscarellam@michigan.gov.